Minutes of the 17 July 2003 meeting of the Oregon Northern California Coast* (ONCC)Technical Recovery Team(TRT) - Oregon Coast Work Group, Corvallis, Oregon

Attendance. *WorkGroup Members:* Tom Nickelson, Tommy Williams, Gordie Reeves, Chuck Huntington, Pete Lawson, Tom Wainwright, Mark Chilcote, Kelly Moore; *Staff:* Heather Stout, Rosemary Furfey; *Visitors:* Kaitlin Lovell (Trout Unlimited), Bruce McIntosh (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)), Ed Bowles (ODFW), Paul Engelmeyer (Audubon), Bob Lohn (National Marine Fisheries Service), Robin Waples (NMFS, by phone).

The meeting convened at 10:15 am.

1. **Introductions.** All members, staff, and guests were introduced; new workgroup members Kelly Moore and Mark Chilcote (approved at the June ONCC TRT meeting in Santa Cruz) were welcomed. It was noted that they are members of the Oregon Coast work group, not the full TRT. It was also announced that Gordie Reeves is now an official member of the ONCC TRT.

2. **Review of Minutes (Stout).** Minutes of the 10 June meeting were approved and will be posted on the NWFSC website (http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/trt_orcoast.htm).

3. **Public Outreach (Furfey, Stout).**

   a) Website—The TRT section of the new Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) website was missing some documents; this is being fixed. Bridgette Lohrman is working on suggestions for redesign of the website.

   b) TRT presentation—Bridgette sent a draft of a PowerPoint presentation for review; she needs edits back by 25 July.

   c) "Dear Interested Parties" letter—Rosemary reported that the letter is ready to go after being signed by Tommy, Pete, and Rob Walton in Recovery Planning at the Northwest Regional Office (NWR).

4. Regional Coordination (Furfey, Stout).

   a) Rosemary discussed work of the state/federal steering committee for the Oregon Coast. Members of the committee are: NMFS Northwest Region--Rosemary Furfey (Salmon Recovery Division), Mike Tehan (Habitat Conservation Division), Donna Darm (Protected Resources Division); Oregon--Geoff Huntington (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)), Tom Byler (Governor's Office), Ed Bowles (ODFW). Their first meeting was held yesterday (16 July). Their first task is drafting a memorandum of agreement between the state and National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration (NOAA Fisheries) regarding cooperation in recovery planning for coastal coho.

   b) Rosemary also discussed implementation of the new joint U.S.Fish and Wildlife Service/NMFS recovery planning guidelines. The guidelines require preparation of

a "recovery plan outline" as the first step in planning. Rosemary is working on this outline; it is a high priority for the Salmon Recovery Division at NMFS NWR.

c)NMFS NWR has established cross-division "domain teams" for each salmon recovery domain, meeting monthly to coordinate activities and information across the NWR divisions.

d)Rosemary met with the Coquille Tribe for a review of federally-funded salmon projects. She will meet with the Siletz tribes later this summer.

e)A fishery management plan for a directed fishery on coho salmon in Siltcoos and Tahkenitch lakes is being reviewed; National Environmental Policy Act documents are in progress.

f)Internal drafts of Oregon coast Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) were sent by Lance Kruzic of NWR for review. It was decided that the workgroup as a whole does not have time to provide comments on these, but individual members were encouraged to comment.

g)The Oregon coast Critical Habitat Analytical Review Team had its first meeting last week.

5.**Summary of Santa Cruz Meeting (Wainwright, Lawson).** The full ONCC TRT met in Santa Cruz June 18th, followed by a SONCC work goup meeting on the 19th. The main discussion at that meeting focused on our proposed approach to population delineation. A goal of the meeting was to come up with a uniform approach to population structure that could be applied to all the coastal coho ESUs, so chairs of other TRTs also participated. Discussion focused on three issues:

a)Is the overall population classification scheme reasonable? The TRT was OK with our designation of diversity units, but had some concerns about the division of populations into "primary," "secondary," and "other." First, there was a comment that while useful, these categories shouldn't constrain how ESU-level viability criteria are formed—for that, we might want to look at a continuum of population structure, rather than discrete categories. Second, there was concern that "primary" and "secondary" are value-laden terms, suggesting that some populations are more important than others for recovery. A suggestion was made that we simply call them "big," "little," and "small."

b)Is the approach to delineating populations OK? The TRT agreed that the point of saltwater entry/exit should be the primary separator of populations. Regarding our proposed method of subdividing populations in large basins, there were two comments. First, some TRT members felt that the requirement of large ecological differences between subbasins was too restrictive, e.g. that distance between spawning areas could be an isolating mechanism even if the subbasins are ecologically similar. Second, it was felt that there was no reason to restrict subdivisions to primary populations, i.e. that a basin could contain multiple populations of any size.

c) How should we define the population categories? Two issues were discussed. First, what should be the basis for defining size or independence categories? Eric

Bjorkstedt suggested that independence is a function of both population size and immigration rates, and presented a simple model for estimating relative independence which could be used for classifying populations. For getting at historic abundance, we need proxies such as basin area or stream miles. The meeting agreed that the CLAMS "intrinsic potential" calculation may provide a good proxy, because it reflects geomorphic habitat features that are related to habitat quality and are likely to have remained fairly constant over recent history. Second, where should the breakpoints between categories be? It was recognized that the 60/15 mile criteria proposed for the Oregon coast were somewhat arbitrary. Other possibilities were suggested: using a correlation of historical abundance estimates with estimated intrinsic potential to set abundance-based breakpoints, using Bjorkstedts model to define breakpoints in terms of estimated percent natural returns, or looking for natural breaks in the distribution of basin sizes within an ESU.

6. **Discussion of Population Classification Approach.** In discussion following this summary, the workgroup decided that we should use intrinsic potential for our classifications, after some "tweaking" of the method. We discussed whether we should stick with the three-category scheme, or reduce it to two categories ("independent" and "other"), but did not reach a consensus. We discussed population independence in relation to probabilities of extirpation/recolonization as a function of basin size and degree of isolation from other populations, and pursued the suggestion that this might be reflected in the proportion of zeros in occupancy data for basins of different sizes. We also discussed the role of small basins in the functioning of the ESU in terms of their potential as "bridge" or "stepping-stone" habitat between larger populations, their importance for ESU viability, possible adaptations to small streams versus large rivers, and their possible use as an early indicator ("canary") of down cycles in productivity. We raised the question of whether these small populations are essential to delisting the ESU, but reached no conclusion

   Action Items: 1) Pete will do an analysis of presence/absence in the rapid bioassessment dataset in relation to basin size. 2) Tom N. will work with Kelly Burnett to produce intrinsic potential calculations for the Oregon coast basins. 3) Tom N. will coordinate with Eric Bjorkstedt on improving the index of independence calculations for the coast. 4) Tom W. will take the proposed population approach to the RSRP meeting in July, and will report on any feedback.

7. **Tasks and Timeline (Lawson)**. We are expecting to receive $250,000 from NOAA to respond to the state and regional office request to fasttrack the Oregon coast coho TRT process. The funds will be used to increase staff support, hire editorial assistance for reports, provide more GIS support, support some of Gordie's time, and support more detailed genetic analyses. Pete presented a draft timeline outlining TRT tasks and schedules, with the addition of some tasks specific to the Oregon wild fish conservation planning process. Pete noted that with additional staff commitments, we may be able to finish some tasks ahead of what is on the schedule, but we should not be willing to commit to a faster schedule given uncertainties in time commitments and the complexity of analyses and decisions. He emphasized that we should put good science ahead of desires based on political processes. We decided to combine the

habitat and the limiting factors elements into a single report. Further discussion focused on what tasks might be moved ahead of schedule: limiting factors analysis could start before population-level criteria are established, and monitoring planning could start before ESU-level criteria are established. We designated a "fasttrack" subcommittee (Lawson, Nickelson, Reeves, Chilcote, Moore) who will meet more frequently than the workgroup, do most of the analyses for this process, and report back to the workgroup. Their first meeting will be July 29th, and will focus on identifying tasks and refining the timeline.

8. **NMFS/NWR Presentation (Lohn).** Bob Lohn joined us to present his ideas on the joint state/federal process, especially how it fits with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and specifics of the TRT process. He reviewed the history of the Oregon coast coho listing and the current situation. He noted that a combination of biology and long-lasting programs to address major factors for decline is needed to gain the confidence needed for delisting, and emphasized that good numbers alone are not enough, that we also need assurances about the future. He described some possible approaches to cooperative state/federal management of Oregon coast coho under the ESA, and how TRT work would fit in with these. Following his presentation, discussion with the workgroup touched on several issues including the role of federal land management in the process, how to incorporate science legacy (such as the Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team (IMST) and Botkin reports) in the process, and how proposed changes in federal wetland protections would affect the process.

9. **Schedule/Next Meetings.** The Oregon work goup will meet August 21st to finalize population delineation decisions for the draft report. The next meeting will be September 21st, at which time the draft population report will be reviewed before it goes to the full TRT. The fasttrack subcommittee will meet July 29th and as necessary following that.

10. **ODFW Comment (McIntosh).** Oregon is concerned about the timeline compared to the NMFS timeline for potential listing/delisting proposals based on the recent status review updates for multiple ESUs. NMFS expects a Federal Register notice to be published in January, followed by a 90-day comment period. ODFW wants a clear report on the linkages between conservation measures and Evolutionarily Significant Unit status before the end of the comment period.

11. **Public Comment.** Paul Engelmeyer made a few comments. He will provide the workgoup with AFS comments on population structure in the Umpqua Basin, and a Forest Service Report- "Biological Characteristics and Population Status of Anadromous Salmon in Southeast Alaska". He noted that we have many streams listed under the Clean Water Act, which indicates serious habitat and temperature problems. He also noted that the rapid bioassessment data in the Mid-Coast for this year indicated less production than was expected given last year's spawner abundance.

Adjourned, 5:05 pm.

*ONCC TRT: Oregon and Northern California Coast TRT, covering the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast and Oregon Coast recovery domains.